

HOUSE BILL ANALYSIS

E2SSB 5825

Title: An act relating to student assessments.

Brief Description: Changing student assessments.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senator McAuliffe; by request of Commission on Student Learning and Superintendent of Public Instruction).

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Meeting Date: March 29, 1999.

Analysis Prepared by: Susan Morrissey (786-7111).

Background: The state currently requires the following statewide student assessments.

Reading accuracy and fluency test: School districts must assess reading accuracy and fluency in the second grade.

Basic skills assessments: School districts must assess basic skills in the third, eighth, and 11th grades. The third grade test assesses reading and math skills. The eighth grade test assesses reading, math, language, reasoning and thinking skills, and inventories student interests. The 11th grade test assesses skills in the broad content areas common to high school, and thinking and reasoning skills. Prior to the 1998-99 school year, the assessment used was the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills. The current test is the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.

Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) at the elementary school level: The WASL is currently required in reading, writing, communication (listening), and math at the fourth grade. There are statutory timelines for implementing an elementary level WASL in science. There are no timelines for implementing the WASL in other content areas at the elementary school level.

WASL at the middle and high school levels: There are statutory timelines for implementing a middle and high school level WASL in reading, writing, communication (listening), math, science, history, civics, geography, arts, and health and fitness.

CSL Recommendations: At its February 3, 1999, meeting, the Commission on Student Learning (CSL) finalized a proposal that combines the assessments in history, civics, and geography into one social studies assessment. The new social studies

assessment would also include economics. The proposal also would delay implementation of the middle and high school social studies and health and fitness assessments for two years. The middle and high school art assessments would be delayed by three years. Before adopting the assessment recommendations, the commission surveyed 1,000 teachers, parents, employers, and community representatives to determine the feasibility of adopting the proposed assessment timelines.

Summary of Bill: Laws are revised that govern the norm-referenced and criterion-referenced standardized tests required of public school students. In addition, the Superintendent of Public Instruction's (SPI) responsibilities are clarified regarding the development and revision of the WASL and the essential academic learning requirements (EALRs). The superintendent will share these responsibilities with the CSL until the commission's authority to exist expires on June 30, 1999.

Reading accuracy and fluency test: The law describing the second grade reading assessment is clarified. The test measures oral reading skills. The SPI may add additional reading passages to the initial list of reading passages used for the assessment.

Basic skills assessments: The third grade test is retained. A new sixth grade basic skills assessment in math and reading/language arts is required. The eighth grade assessment is moved to the ninth grade. The 11th grade assessment is repealed.

WASL at the elementary school level: Timelines are created for implementing the WASL in social studies, health, fitness, and the arts at the elementary level. The social studies assessment will be available in the 2002-03 school year, and required statewide by the 2005-06 school year. Arts and health and fitness assessments will be available by the 2003-04 school year and required by the 2007-08 school year.

WASL at the middle and high school levels: The implementation of the WASL in social studies, health, and fitness at the middle and high school levels is delayed for two years. The implementation of the WASL in the arts at the middle and high school levels is delayed for three years. The social studies assessments will be available in the 2002-03 school year, and required statewide by the 2005-06 school year. Arts and health and fitness assessments will be available by the 2003-04 school year and required by the 2006-07 school year. The high school science assessment is delayed for one year.

Differences between 2SHB 1891 and E2SSB 5825:

} **2SHB 1891** includes language that, to the extent possible, aligns the basic skills assessed in the norm-referenced tests with the state's EALRs. E2SSB removed that language.

- } **2SHB 1891** moves the middle school reading test up by one year.
- } **2SHB 1891** retains in current law language that permits rather than requires SPI to include a collection of related school and student information in the ninth grade norm-referenced assessment.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested March 24, 1999.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.